1:Srinivas E=5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

as symbols of its identity and individuality, if not superiority. The saw '*ār nāḍku nūr pāje*', which might be translated as 'six *nāḍs*, hundred customs', testifies to the great cultural diversity within Coorg.

A *nāḍ* might differ from other *nāḍs* in the matter of the date of observance of important festivals such as the harvest festival and festival of arms. It might also differ in the articles used in the festival ritual: for instance, the plants used in the harvest festival ritual vary in different *nāḍs*, and this is due to the fact that in each area the plants locally prolific are chosen to express a wish for growth.

The various villages of a *nāḍ* co-operate on certain occasions as the harvest festival and the periodical festival of the local village-deity. During the harvest festival, on the day after the village dance (*ūr kōlu*), a dance for the entire *nāḍ* (*nāḍ kōlu*) is held in which all the men of the *nāḍ* take part. Games testing the strength and skill of individuals are also held on this occasion, and this provides an opportunity for the canalization of inter-village rivalry, just as at a festival in a village the games played canalizes inter-*okka* rivalry.

When the bridegroom is marching in state to the bride's house it is customary for the villages in the groom's *nāḍ* to offer him the 'plantain honour' (*bāḷé birudu*): a row of three stout plaintain stems are fixed to the ground near the boundary (*mundalé*) of the village or *nāḍ*, and the groom is asked to cut the stems with his sword. The groom delegates someone to cut the stems on his behalf. The man offering the groom the 'plantain honour' should be wearing a Coorg gown, and he offers the party warm water to wash their hands and feet, mats to sit on, and betel leaves and arecanut to chew. (Warm water, mat, and betel and nut are all symbols of hospitality and respect in Coorg as elsewhere in India.) If the party arrive at night the host provides them with torches for the road. The groom has to pay a money gift of two *paṇas* (about six annas) to the host in acknowledgement of the honour and hospitality done to him and his party.

A man has a great love for his *nāḍ*. This comes out repeatedly in Coorg folklore. An infant boy, called Chondu, was orphaned, and the *nāḍ* elders had to make arrangements for his care. When Chondu reached the years of discretion he wanted to show how deeply he appreciated what his *nāḍ* had done for him. He deter-

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Guḷika is different from Kūḷi which merely means a spirit or ghost. Kūḷis are troublesome spirits which cause illness, possess people, and have to be propitiated with offerings of food and drink.

XVI

The ancestral house has a special importance to a Coorg: he regards it as sacred, he is bound by very powerful ties to it, and he considers it the proper place where the marriage of a member should be celebrated and where his funeral should be performed. Even today the various branches of an *okka* gather together at the ancestral house during the harvest festival and during the Kāvēri festival. They also gather together for the festival of the local village-deity which may be held annually or biennially, and for the performance of ancestor-propitiation.

The house is swept and cleaned every day, and on special ritual occasions such as a festival or ancestor-propitiation, its walls are colour-washed, and the floor washed with a solution of cow-dung, a common purifying agent all over India. A festival is also a holiday, and the men abstain from agricultural work and perform festival tasks such as hanging up festoons of mango leaves on the lintel above the main door. Everyone has a bath and changes into clean clothes brought by the washerman. A festival also means a feast and the feast may be either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. All over south India the feasts which are a part of calendar festivals may not include non-vegetarian dishes—this is an idea implicit in Sanskritic Hinduism. Non-Brahmins usually prepare non-vegetarian dishes on the day following the feast.

Coorgs follow other Hindus in preparing purely vegetarian dishes on festival days. Even the ancestors are offered vegetarian dishes at these calendar festivals. But on those occasions which are exclusively devoted to the worship of ancestors meat and pork dishes and arrack are the preferred offerings to them. Some village-deities again require offerings of non-vegetarian dishes and liquor at festivals in their honour.

Another aspect of calendar festivals needs to be referred to here: festivals such as the festival of arms and the harvest festival include games like shooting at a target, running a race, throwing a stone, &c. These games prove an occasion for the expression of the rivalry that exists between the *okkas* in a village or *nāḍ*. Such an

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

796 526 578 occasion also canalizes the rivalry that exists in certain forms that *are not* destructive of the social order. Coorgs themselves treat this part of their calendar festivals as providing an arena for the expression of inter-*okka* rivalry.

596 796 621 Co-operation between *okkas* also receives emphasis at these festivals. Every *okka* in the village (or *nāḍ*) is required to send all the adult males in it to the collective dances which are held at the harvest festival. Again, there is a collective hunt at the end of the harvest festival (and usually at the end of the festivals of the village-deities) to which every *okka* has to send *all* the adult males in it. Failure to do so would result in a fine being levied on the defaulting *okka*.

When the festival of a village-deity is being performed, every *okka* (excluding *okkas* of very low castes) has to send a man to help in festival work such as clearing the weeds growing in the temple compound and on the road along which the deity will be taken out in procession.

There is also a minute division of the ritual tasks among the high caste *okkas* in the village. For instance, the representative of one *okka* carries the image of the deity, while the representative of another *okka* carries a lamp and the representative of yet another *okka* carries the money-box (*cheppu*), and so on. Formerly these tasks were looked upon as privileges, and an *okka* was jealous of the privileges to which it was entitled by tradition and custom.

The village is a unity made up of the various *okkas* in it. The individuality of each participating *okka* and the unity of all the *okkas* in the village[1] are both brought out in Professor Emeneau's description of a dance held at the festival of Bhadrakāḷi at Karavalé-bāḍga near Mercara. Professor Emeneau writes:

> this dance is performed on several days both at the temple and on the dancing-green. In this the essential performers are a male member of each *sib* [*okka*] in the village, carrying each a *koḍi* or staff surmounted by cloth tied in the form of two cones with their bases together and the apex of one pointing upward. Each performer has the right arm bare and a fold of the turban hanging down his back. If all the male members of a *sib* should be unable to dance because of age or infirmity, the *koḍi*

[1] Castes like the Poleya are excluded from this unity. It is recognized that such castes perform extremely useful tasks both in day-to-day living and at festivals, but their position in the social hierarchy excludes them from certain positions and tasks. The principle of stratification modifies the idea of the unity of a village.

hold duties for 60 days to recover her normal health, and devote herself to her baby. During this period she daily bathes in hot water after having been well rubbed with castor oil before a charcoal fire. The robust health of a Coorg woman is no doubt due to the care taken by them during pregnancy and confinement.

Naming Ceremony

As soon as a Coorg boy is born, a little bow of a castor oil plant stick with an arrow made of a leaf stalk of the same plant is put into his little hands and a gun is fired in the courtyard. He is thus at taking his first breath introduced into the world as a future hunter and warrior. This ceremony is not generally now observed. On the twelfth day after birth, the child is laid into a cradle by the mother or grandmother who gives the name, which in many instances is well sounding and significant. Boys are known by Belliappah, Ponnappa, Mandanna and girls Puvakka, Muthakka and Chinnamma. The Coorg women are very prolific and bear children to the extent of ten or twelve. In cases of necessity a wet-nurse is engaged, but infanticide is not practised.

Family

The Coorg family is of the patriarchal type. It is the domicile of all male relatives and their children belonging to one parental stock. Two or three generations, grandfather, grandmother, their sons, daughters, daughters-in-law and other children numbering from 20 to 60 or even more in some cases, all live and mess together. The labourers who were once their slaves belong to the family and depend on their mistress for food and orders. So long as there is peace and harmony, a Coorg family is a fine example of the patriarchal type. Every domestic affair of importance can be undertaken only with the consent of the senior member. He is expected to look after the principal needs of the family and its members individually and check irregularities of all kinds by sound discipline. The nature and extent of his control may be gathered from the fact that married sons and their wives choose their residence under the paternal roof to avoid the responsibility of a separate establishment. The senior female member is the queen of the household, and holds a corresponding position among the junior members and their wives and daughters. The peace and harmony of the family that once prevailed may be marred by discord, by the harsh treatment of an imperious mother-in-law, by the jealousy and heart-burnings of the married members of the material questions affecting the family income and individual claims. The senior member who is the Karnavan of the family has no easy position under such circumstances. The domestic life under normal circumstances is brightened by the affection of the children for their parents and relatives, and the little ones, of whom there is generally a good number, are in turn great pets of the family. The bearing of the young in the presence of the old is decorous, but the grown-up members are not

596 generally well guarded in the use of proper expressions in their talk with the young. The educated men of the present day exercise a potent influence for good in the normal conversation, and show due respect to their [607] brother's wife with whom no familiarity is allowed. There is a tendency [173] at present among the discontented members to break up the ancestral family [578] by a division of the family property among the members.

Property and Disposal

423 The property of the Coorgs consists chiefly of the ancestral house
425 and the land belonging to it which under the Rajas was held on a feudal
177 tenure and on a light assessment termed *jamma bhumi* or birthright land, because it was inalienably vested in the family or house, and the British Government confirmed the settlement. Additional land was taken up by them on the *sagu* tenure, but, in course of time, Government allowed to some extent such *sagu* land to be converted into *jamma* land. Other land held as jagir was granted for certain Government service as *umbli* land on a light assessment. During the last thirty years, many houses have opened out coffee plantations on their own or Govern-
434 ment land, or rented cardamom jungles. Thus the actual wealth of the
421 Coorgs consists of landed property and their prosperity depends on the
596 exertions and means of cultivation; but imprudent enterprises and un-
[556] expected reverses have caused much embarrassment. Formerly, all the members of a Coorg house lived together in the ancestral home or in some outfarm, *koppu*, neither of which could be alienated nor subdivided among the members of the family. All of them worked for the common good under the management of the *yajamana* or *karakara*, and had their subsistence on the proceeds. Any surplus on the annual reckoning became
[433] the property of the house for providing incidental expenditure on the occasion of marriages, funerals, and other ceremonies, as also for the purchase of new land in the interest of the family. If, however, an individual member by becoming a salaried officer or by coming into possession of money through marriage, was enabled to enter upon private speculation without any aid from the ancestral house, any property or acquirements thus made became his private property and were left at his own disposal by gift or will. Many young men have thus become
[591] separated from the ancestral house and established a new homestead, and as long as they contributed to the expenses of the former, they maintained
[182] their share in the proceeds. This is the proper mode of setting up a new house. Disintegration is now setting in, and some try to break up the ancestral houses by a division of the landed property among the members.

Adoption

597 The right of adoption is given to every Coorg house in the absence of male issue, or by an unmarried man or woman or widower in order to secure the inheritance of personal property or rights.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

231 cription might be reared on sound farming principles. As it is, the cattle of Coorg are of a mediocre breed, better in the north and east, worse in the centre and south-west. The [439] Coorgs procure their cattle partly from Mysore, partly from the annual fair at Subramanya. The ryots have generally too great a number of them, to which they cannot properly attend, and it is not to be wondered, that there is almost annually a great mortality amongst the cattle from what the Coorgs call dodda róga i. e. great disease, the cattle refusing food and being frequently purged, gantlu-kattu i. e. throat swelling disease and the kálu-jwara or foot-sore disease. The [578] increasing coffee cultivation of late years has somewhat limited the pasturage and the constant cattle trespass on coffee plantations is a cause of much vexation and loss, both to 231 planters and ryots. The Coorgs, like other Hindoos, hold the 778 cow sacred; it is a sort of sentimental veneration for the ani- 656 mal which ploughs the fields and, motherlike, gives milk; 648 but does not prevent them from inflicting cruelty upon the sacred beast by ill use, neglect and starvation. The slaughter of kine within the limits of the Coorg Province was distinctly prohibited by General Fraser on the assumption of the administration in the following terms:

To

Lieutenant C. F. Le HARDY,

Superintendent of Coorg.

Sir,

Having ascertained, that it is highly offensive to the religious feelings of the people of Coorg, that cows or bullocks should be killed for the purpose of being used as an article of food, I request, that you will be so good as to prohibit this

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

A Coorg woman is rarely idle, her busy hands find always some work to do, and no wonder, if we consider the life and bustle of a Coorg house with its 40, 60, or 80 and more inmates. Two or three generations, grandfather and grandmother, their sons and daughters-in-law and the children of these families all live and mess together. The labourers also belong to the household and look up to the mistress for food and orders. The fattening of the pigs, the milking of the cows, the water supply for the house, these and many other cares are under the immediate supervision of the mistress. Where peace and harmony exist, a Coorg house presents a patriarchal life indeed, but the idyllic picture is too often marred by discord occasioned by the harsh régime of an imperious mother-in-law, by the jealousy and heartburnings of married brothers, or the more material questions of family income and individual claims. The master or yejamána, who is always the senior male member of the house, has no easy position, especially in our days, when a tendency to break up these large houses clearly manifests itself. But Coorg women of a commanding spirit and superior character are often heard of who, like Abigail of old, with tact and wisdom subdue the unruly elements of this bustling human beehive and make the residents subservient to the common weal and honour of the family. Here is a story to the purpose:—"Six generations ago, there was a woman called Doddi Auwa—the great lady—who lived at Almanda house, in the village of Arméri, which belongs to Beppunádu. She was the mistress of the Almanda property, being the only child of rich parents. She was a woman of extraordinary size and strength of body. Nor was she less distinguished by qualities of mind and character. Throughout the country she was known as the wisest, the richest, the strongest of Coorg women. Independent owner of a Coorg estate, she was at liberty to choose a husband for herself. Her choice fell upon a man of the same clan. Utta-

[Errata: This should read "Dodda-Auva." see Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 493 -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

when feeling sure of his position, he imposed upon his followers instead of the voluntary Dhúli-batta (dusty-grain) a regular tax of one and a half butty of rice and nine annas eight pies in cash per house per annum. His next step was to call upon the people, in alternate parties to guard his dwelling on the Háleri farm. These watchmen were called *Chaudigara*, a name ever afterwards retained for the Coorg Rájahs' troops. Having openly declared himself and being acknowledged by his adherents ruler of Háleri and of the surrounding Náds, the Padinalknád Karanembáu Náyaka also submitted and so did the others under the condition, that they should receive three-fourths of the revenue and pay one-fourth to the Háleri chief. His increasing power soon threatened the safety of the Coorg Náyakas, who at last were put to death and the whole country brought under the Háleri government.

That the Coorg Rájahs were aliens to the country is evident from the fact, that they were Lingaites, whilst the Coorgs maintained their own crude form of demon- and ancestor-worship and rarely joined the Shivácháries. These are most numerous in north-east Coorg where the people are closely allied with the Mysoreans, and where the influence of the Rájahs was naturally greatest. Again in Padinalknád the Malayálam element seems to be predominant, whilst in Táwnád, Bengnád and Surlabimuttanád the Tulu Gaudas and Bants make their influence felt. If a further proof were required to show that the Coorgs are a mixed race, I need only mention, that besides the striking difference in features and colour of the Coorgs, varying between the Caucasian and Mongolian physiognomy and between a fair and dark skin, the house-names also of many Coorg families clearly point to Mysore, Tamil, Malayálam or Tulu origin. Even within the memory of the present generation strangers were received by and incorporated with the Coorgs. There is now a dispute pending about six families in Kiggatnád, who ten years

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

643
648
174
177
[578]
[564]

ago were, by the Head-Sheristadar Nanchappa, received as Coorgs, but after his death were expelled from the clan by the rest of the Coorg people. The settlement of the dispute will perhaps be only a matter of time, but not of intrinsic caste spirit which as such is inconsistent with the notorious Coorg practice of assimilating cognate tribes into one clan, and with the fact, that during the Seringapatam captivity of thousands of Coorg families by Tippu Sultan, most of them were forcibly made Mussulmans and, though on the return to their country, they abjured Islam, the very process of circumcision deprived them of their previous caste—in a brahminical sense—and rendered that of their descendents defective. The renown of the Coorgs lies certainly not in the purity and antiquity of their genealogy, but in the union and strength of so many discordant elements into one compact body or clan, that bravely fought on every occasion of danger for the honour and safety of their adopted country, whether under the leadership of their own Náyakas or their alien Rájahs, and there can be no doubt that they would in time of need, with equal loyalty rally round the standard of their English Rulers!

619
186
175
[628]
[648]

To the question, how such a conglomerate of divers tribes could have been formed into an almost homogenous body, I would reply, that what might perhaps have been impossible amongst a civilized and politically powerful state, was a comparatively easy process in a small uncivilized and secluded hill-country, which, seldom influenced by the politics of its more powerful neighbours, and in blissful ignorance undisturbed by subtle religious disputes, vented its savage strength in intestine feuds, till the despotic hand of the alien usurper subjected the turbulent chiefs, and united them and their adherents in deadly combat against common foes or for marauding expeditions. Their defeats as well as their achievements originated and strengthened national sympathies which time matured into a healthy spirit of clanship, that asserted

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

with a sum of Rs. 300, the interest of which goes towards the teacher's pay. The school is now under Government management and incorporated with the Anglo-Vernacular School. 797 648 [871]

In the year 1834 the Basel Missionary Society commenced operations on the western coast, in the neighbourhood of Coorg, and extended their stations to the north and south. Mercara and Vírájpet were now and then visited; but no proposal was made to the Committee to occupy Coorg. Thus the country remained nearly twenty years under British rule without the establishment of a Mission, until Dr. Moegling in 1852 was in an unforeseen and singular manner led to commence the long delayed work.

Being on the point of returning to Germany to recruit his shattered health, he was visited by a Coorg man, disguised as a Sanyási, who applied for instruction in the Christian doctrine. He was an intelligent and astute Coorg and the story of his life highly interesting. Having been baptized on the 6th January 1853, Stephanas Someyah of Almanda in Beppunád, returned unexpected and unnoticed to his house. His wife received him with great joy and declared that she would live and die with him. On the following day Stephanas took formal possession of his house, and Dr. Moegling, who had accompanied him, resolved on standing by the family and becoming security to the creditors, who speedily assembled for the liquidation of the debts of the convert. Two days afterwards his neighbours and relatives drove him and his family out of their house at night and forced them to take refuge with the missionary at Vírájpet. The Superintendent enquired into the case and the Chief Commissioner, Sir Mark Cubbon, to whom the matter was referred gave the following decision:— 797 578

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

To

THE SUPERINTENDENT

of Coorg.

799
578

Sir,

The Commissioner, having had under consideration your various communications regarding the reception on his return to Coorg of one, Somiah who has left his caste, I have the honor, by his advice to convey to you his instructions as to the manner in which this and similar cases should be dealt with.

In the first place it seems to be admitted on all hands, that but for the fact of his having left his caste, Somiah, as the rightful head by inheritance of his branch of his family, had nothing to do but to return to Coorg and take quiet possession of his house and lands. There would have been no aggrieved party in this case, and it requires to be shown, that there is an aggrieved party in the case as it really happened.

If it be true, as stated in the papers under notice, and the Commissioner sees no reason to doubt that it is so, that several instances exist of individuals having become outcasts from their own religion and even converts to Mahomedanism and yet been allowed to remain in quiet possession of their estates; it is clear that degradation from caste for misconduct or on voluntary change of faith is not of itself regarded in Coorg as involving the deprivation of hereditary or self-acquired property. It is therefore evident in the present instance, that neither on national nor on caste grounds could there have been an aggrieved party, unless perhaps in the event of his wife and children and the other inmates of the house which he came to occupy, having felt themselves polluted by his neighbourhood. So far, however, is this from being the case, that it appears, that one and all of them preferred being turned out in his company in the middle of the night, to remaining under shelter of the roof without him; and it is moreover subsequently reported, that the wife and children lost no time in following his example and making a public renunciation of the faith in which they had been brought up.

Under these circumstances the Commissioner must regard the act of those people who violently ejected him from the house, of which he had been in quiet possession for nearly three days, as a gross and flagrant insult to the Government, only to be excused by their ignorance and their having been led away to a certain extent by the evil example of their Subaddr Appachoo. Of the conduct of Appachoo himself, there can be but one opinion, but the Commissioner is not unwilling to overlook for once the error of an old and able

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

servant of the Government and trusts, that Appachoo will justify his good opinion of him by the cheerful alacrity with which he will replace Somiah in possession of the house and lands of which he was so illegally and violently deprived. 797 578

You will be good enough, carefully to explain the whole of the foregoing to all the parties concerned and at the same time inform them, that the civil courts are open to them, should they still consider that there are any legal grounds for depriving this convert of his inheritance."

&c. &c. &c.

The Coorg-family returned to their home in June; Dr. Moegling remained in their neighbourhood during the monsoon. With the beginning of the cold season he made preparations for building a little church and a dwelling-house on a piece of ground given by Stephanas to the Mission and the work of preaching at the principal market-places was commenced. Having taken all these steps without the Society's sanction, the founder of the Mission had to bear all the burden of its support and arrangement as well as the evangelistic labour for six long years. Strong in faith, however, he cheerfully and regardless of his prostrate health, devoted himself to his Master's work who did not forsake him in his daily wants. The publication of the "Coorg Memoirs" and the periodical reports of his work in the "Madras Christian Herald" greatly helped to interest the South-Indian public in his Mission. 797

A new Mission seldom thrives well under regulations unadapted to its peculiar circumstances and requirements and Dr. Moegling had the courage to trust, that he might be able unembarrassed to labour on, and his experience was, that he could gratefully and rejoicingly say, that no man should be discouraged by mere want of money from doing his duty! Whilst standing alone with his Mission, he still continued in connexion with the Basel Committee in everything except financial support and obedience to the rules of their conference as applied to the older stations.